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# SLAVERY

## SANCTIONED BY THE BIBLE.

THE FIRST PART OF A

GENERAL TREATISE ON THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

BY

JOHN RICHTER JONES.

THE FIRST PART OF A  
GENERAL TREATISE ON THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

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## DEDICATORY PREFACE.

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TO THE CLERGY OF NEW ENGLAND,

THIS ATTEMPT OF A LAYMAN TO "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES" ON THE SLAVERY QUESTION IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

Thus far, my clerical friends, you have been more like the men of Thessalonica than those of Berea. With no other scriptural warrant than your mere assumption of the meaning of the word of God, you have preached a political and moral crusade against slavery. With facts from novels and campaign documents, and with principles furnished by infidel sophists, you have misled yourselves and the flocks intrusted to your charge. If you had searched the Scriptures, you could not have been misled, and would not now have the responsibility of this terrible national crisis.

It is your work—the result of your teaching—that large portions of the North regard slaveholders generally as heinous transgressors of the law of God, with whom no Christian fellowship is admissible, and no political compacts binding: your work, that recrimination has driven the South into feelings equally unchristian, and into measures even more unconstitutional: your work, that countrymen and brethren are mutually exasperated, and ready for the signal of fratricidal war: your work, that a land but yesterday the most prosperous the sun shines on, is suddenly visited by a fearful pouring out of "the vials of the wrath of God." And if the end is not yet; if—after the rivers of blood which must flow in the civil strife of our warlike race—the great Republic, divided and broken, shall float down the course of time in jarring fragments, until united again by anarchy and despotism; if this home of freedom—

home of the oppressed of all nations—become itself a house of bondage; if the grand experiment of self-government, with the political progress and general evangelization of man, be irretrievably blasted: the work will be yours, the responsibility yours.

Oh men of God! men of God! it is a terrible responsibility. The responsibilities of those churchmen who extinguished the religious light of the Netherlands in blood, or of those who ordered the massacre of St. Bartholomew's, were a feather's weight to yours. They stood on the same plea of conscience as you do now: just as you do now, they thought themselves serving the cause of God and religion: if told that their conscience was erroneous, they would have mocked at the admonition—as you do at mine. They will be fearfully wakened up in that “day of wrath,” when all of us shall stand before that “great white throne” of Him, from whose “face the earth and the heaven flee away.” God in his mercy grant that your wakening up may not be in eternity!

Has it ever struck you, my clerical friends, that possibly, only possibly—but the merest possibility is enough to make the stout heart quake—possibly your conscience, in regard to slavery, may be erroneous? possibly you may have mistaken the “law of God” and “the spirit and principle of the Gospel?” If I can rouse you to this possibility, and lead you “to search the Scriptures” faithfully and prayerfully for “the mind and will of Christ,” I shall have done a good work in the “Master's” service.

Very respectfully,

YOUR LAY BROTHER.



# SLAVERY SANCTIONED BY THE BIBLE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MY POSITION DEFINED.

As a "tract for the times," I propose making a calm, logical examination of the slavery question. The times do indeed require something of the kind.

A question which is breaking up our nationality; rendering the American people what Mexico is, and Italy has been; exposing us as feeble, separate States, to the contempt of the world; and which at the same time is putting in hazard and doubt the very experiment of self-government itself: a question the most momentous that ever agitated a community, has not been discussed at all, or discussed with angry passions and reciprocal abuse. The harm is incalculable. A just exhibition of facts at an early stage, with a full discussion of principles, might have scattered the storm harmlessly before it came to a head.

The cloud at first was "no larger than a man's hand." But human nature afforded ready elements of cumulation. Those generous impulses of the heart, which revolt at oppression everywhere—impulses which sympathize blindly in a tale of woe, alike moved whether it be real or fictitious—were appealed to by a single emissary of foreign fanaticism, and a single fanatical press in the capital of New England. Cases of cruel treatment of Southern slaves, real or fictitious—if real, isolated and anomalous; if fictitious, of course highly colored—were kept continually before the public. Principles of liberty and equality, so dear to the American heart, were persistently invoked. No one in the North felt interested in discussing, much less in defending, slavery. Fictitious facts and unjust inferences passed unchallenged; inapplicable theories—and the theories of the Declaration of Independence are practically applicable only where men are capable of self-government—were not scrutinized: thus judgment against slavery went by default. Through assumptions of fact and misapplications of theory, the public opinion of the North was gradually led to regard slaveholding as inconsistent with Christian morality and Amer-

ican republicanism. Such was especially the case in New England, and with the men everywhere of New England blood or affinities.

This general antislavery sentiment—which unquestionably pervades more or less the whole North, and also the English, French, and German races abroad—is the quiescent element of abolitionism. Special causes concurred to raise a storm; or the element might have remained possibly harmless. First, I may mention politics: the Democratic party was strong in the South, and blackening the South and its institutions was damaging the Democracy; thus the partisan press came into the field and turned its energetic batteries against slavery. Next, the church: the clergy of New England enlisted almost unanimously in the antislavery ranks; for the same reasons, perhaps, that arrayed them with similar unanimity against Jefferson. Next, literature: that one work, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” touching with consummate artistic power those impulses which were already vivified, was a most potential agent; more so than any other singly. Politics, religion, and literature were causes more than sufficient. Abhorrence of slavery grew at length into hatred of slaveholders. Christian charity and gentlemanly courtesy toward those who were held up as “those oppressors of their fellow-men, the cruel task-masters of the down-trodden slave,” ceased to be a duty. Terms of reproach and abuse, such as are seldom resorted to, even for the lowest and worst of mankind, were unsparingly used by the press, in sermons and lectures, and even in the halls of Congress. The compacts of the national constitution, with “men worse than pirates and murderers,” were pronounced “a league only fit for devils,” and in defiance of the clearest stipulations for the rendition of slaves, personal liberty laws were passed. Finally, the “irrepressible conflict”—an unceasing war on slavery everywhere—was inaugurated as a moral and political duty.

In the storm which is tearing our nationality to pieces, the masses of the people have been passive elements carried along by the angry passions of the few. Of Pennsylvania, my own State, I can say positively that we have very little active abolitionism. And in the more Northern States, if the antislavery cause could be separated entirely from politics, I do not believe that one-twentieth of the voters would countenance in any way the irrepressible conflict. The present storm is thus like popular tempests generally, one of those blasts which speedily blow themselves out. But the antislavery sentiment of the North generally is deeper seated, and more dangerous, and likely sooner or later, unless corrected, to destroy the National Union of the American people. While Northern Christians regard slaveholders as unworthy to worship at the same altars, there can be no real cordiality; while Northern legislators regard slavery as at variance with those fundamental principles of liberty on which our

nationality is founded, they will not heartily enforce the clauses of the Constitution for the rendition of slaves; while Northern philanthropists see in slaveholding only brutal oppression, humanity and religion—higher authorities than human laws—will be enlisted in the cause of disorganization. Until Northern men generally look on slaveholders, not as enemies of morality, religion, and liberty, but as fellow-citizens and countrymen, whom peculiar circumstances oblige—unfortunately oblige—to adopt peculiar institutions, which are neither immoral nor barbarous, there can be no permanent hope for the Republic.

To contribute something toward a sounder public opinion—to relieve slavery from a false position, which is vastly detrimental to the national weal—is the purpose I have in view. My tract for the times is a sober appeal to the “sober second thought” of the people of the North, and I appeal to them as men who are not willingly unjust, though under the influence of human passions, (*humanum est errare*,) liable to be often temporarily wrong. Appeals to the South against the secession frenzy, which is pulling down the pillars of the Union on their own heads and on ours, will be made I trust by Southern men; nothing from any Northern source would be of any use now.

Whether my discussion can effect any change of public opinion, or change even a single individual, I do not know. I know this, however, my own views have been changed by examining the question; and considerations which have changed the opinions of one man may change those of others. I shall hope so at least. All I ask of my readers is a fair hearing: “strike, but hear.”

I am not the advocate of slavery. I regard it as a great evil, and so I do despotism: both are evils, but both under certain circumstances preferable to worse. The despotic government of Napoleon the Third is better than the republic of Robespierre; the slavery of South Carolina is better than the freedom of Dahomey or St. Domingo; better for the present happiness of the negro, better for his progress in civilization, better for his religious hopes, and moral condition. If men were as they ought to be, there would be no slavery, nor despotic government. As men actually are, both have existed in all ages as far back as history runs, and will, I fear, continue more or less generally, until man's fallen nature be changed. The stubborn fact being so, and governments and institutions being intended for men as they actually are, not as they ought to be, we must organize or tolerate what suits their actual condition. Establishing a republic prematurely among a people unfit for self-government is idle mockery, and ends eventually where it were better to have begun. So the abolition of slavery among negroes prematurely only renders their condition worse. Meanwhile I cannot consider those who exercise des-

potic powers—and all powers not derived from the consent of the governed, even those of the queen and peers of England, are despotic—nor those that hold slaves, as violating the laws of God; though I do admit that using those powers unrighteously, in either case, is sinful. Speaking not as the advocate of slavery, but as the exponent of sound principles of political and social organization, I regard the antislavery sentimentality of the North as a political and moral mistake.

On this basis I lay down the following propositions, which I propose to discuss and to maintain:

1. That slavery, so far from being prohibited, is sanctioned by the Bible.
2. Slavery is not in antagonism with the Declaration of Independence.
3. Property in slaves rests on the same title as any other property.
4. Slaveholding is not inconsistent with humanity and civilization.

As I have already virtually said, I intend my arguments for those moderate antislavery men who are open to conviction, and willing to change their opinions when convinced of error. That class who never change, because they never are wrong, I do not hope to move, and I shall not try.

Before I commence my discussion, however, I will define and explain my terms.

The term slavery is as vaguely used as any word in our language. Some understand by it an unlimited power of life and death, such as the Roman *paterfamilias* exercised; others transfer the atrocities of Dahomey to our Southern States; others are satisfied with the milder, though still inhuman scenes of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." But the slavery of foreign lands, and of fictitious literature, and of the New England imagination, have been before the public more than sufficiently already, being in fact the main element of abolitionism; and my subject is the slavery of actual life. The slavery which I propose to discuss is the political and social condition of the negro bondmen of our Southern States; that condition which is recognized by the real laws and actual usages of the South, and brought into contact with the North in the rendition clause of the Constitution, a clause which not only presents us the only aspect of slavery which our positive constitutional obligations require us men of the non-slaveholding States to recognize, but also affords an accurate definition of it. Let us examine the clause:—

"No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation thereof be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor shall be due."

According to this definition a slave is a "person held to service or labor" under the laws of any State. He is called a *person*: so he actually is by the laws of the Southern States: he is under many disabilities, but he has also many personal rights; the right to life for instance, as fully as the master himself. He is a person to whose service or labor another man has a legal claim, and over whom that other man exercises such legal authority as is necessary to enforce his claims. Our Northern rhetoric calls the slave a thing. Southern laws do not make him such, any more than our Northern laws make the indentured apprentice a thing; in fact, there is considerable analogy. The master has a claim to the service or labor of his apprentice; he has legal authority to enforce his claim by corporal chastisement, and he derives his claim from the same source as the Southern master—the law.

I am well aware that some Southern law books call the slave a chattel. The phraseology is inaccurate. The slave is not a chattel in the common law sense of the word; though the claim to his service or labor may perhaps be called a chattel interest. If we analyze Southern legislation, we find that the property is only in the slave's service or labor, with limited powers over his person. In fact no human laws can give one man unlimited powers over the person—which involves not only the body but the whole moral responsibilities—of another man; and the South has not attempted it. The distinction, that slave property is in the service or labor, not in the person, is not more refined than many we are accustomed to in questions affecting rights.

My definition presents the abstract form of slavery, and my right to place myself on so narrow ground will probably be questioned. I must take into the argument, it will be said, all the consequences of giving one man arbitrary powers over another. I am perfectly willing to do so as soon as we can agree on those consequences; agree from the facts, I mean; not the facts of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," or of sensation sermons, or of campaign documents, but the facts of actual life. At present, I fear, we are not ready for a case stated. In my belief, on the evidence—partly my own observation, twenty-five years ago, for I have not been south of the Potomac since—slaves are as well treated generally as Northern apprentices; I even believe them to be better off, generally, than our Northern free blacks—always excepting a few abolitionist pets. I also believe their religious and moral condition not only vastly better than if their race had remained in Africa, but, judging from the number of professing Christians, as good comparatively as the rest of mankind. You, my abolitionist friend, do not agree with me, of course; for if you did you could not be an abolitionist; and you will refer me to your view of the facts. All very well, when we have the evidence; but meanwhile

I must be allowed to stand on my own belief. Still there are some facts which I am willing to concede. During my own visit to the South, I did not see a single slave actually whipped, though I saw many who ought to have been; still I am willing to concede that individual cases of cruelty—equal even to the treatment of “Uncle Tom”—have occurred in the South. I believe it, not because you tell me so—for I do not believe any of your facts could be verified satisfactorily to a Pennsylvanian jury—but on the evidence of human nature. There must be mean men in the South as well as elsewhere. In the North we are obliged occasionally to annul indentures of apprenticeship on account of cruelty: I have done so myself judicially, even in Philadelphia; and I am not willing to believe Philadelphia masters worse than those of the South. Of course there is cruelty in the South; for men are of like passions there as everywhere. I concede the individual cases of cruelty, but I believe them exceptions: it would be just as unreasonable to condemn the whole class of Northern masters from isolated instances of cruelty toward their apprentices, or Northern parents generally, on the brutality of that father who kept his child naked in an outhouse for several years, as to anathematize all slaveholders because there may be among them one monster like Mrs. Stowe’s model villain.

While the facts remain as they are, disputed and unsettled, we must discuss slaveholding in the abstract, if we have any logical discussion at all. It is the attempt to argue from disputed facts which has made the bitterness of this controversy. In truth, however, my definition covers the whole ground. Slaveholding in the abstract, without reference to local exigencies, or extenuating circumstances, is held up as a “gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature,” and “utterly inconsistent with the law of God.” To meet and confute this abstract denunciation involves the substance of the controversy.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT SANCTION.

#### SECTION I.

##### THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

“SLAVEHOLDING, so far from being prohibited, is actually sanctioned” by the Bible.

So stands my first proposition. With rare unanimity the clergymen of New England, who differ so widely on most points of scriptural reading, have decided this point in the negative. The *prima facie* case being so overwhelmingly against me, it is adventurous—presumptuous I might say at once, for so “the sisters” will regard it—for a single layman to undertake to reverse the decision. But I have known the judges of our courts, who study the law as carefully as our clerical friends do the Gospel, to be clearly mistaken; to own their mistakes; and even to correct them. Whether “the cloth” have equal magnanimity—not being so well acquainted with them as with my own profession—I cannot confidently say. I trust, however, that St. Paul (2 Cor. iii. 15) was not hitting them over the heads of the Jews. Being on clerical ground, however, where my footsteps are necessarily not so firm as in the neighborhood of the forum, I shall principally let the Book itself argue the question. It is not presumption—in our Protestant land at least—for a layman to “search the Scriptures;” nor to note down the passages he finds; nor, if he do not understand the meaning himself, to ask his clerical friends; nor in all humility to mention his own opinions, even in respectful dissent from their better knowledge. In this deferential way I begin with the Book of Genesis.

The first passage of Genesis—and of the Bible, of course—which has any reference to slavery, is Noah’s curse of Canaan, the son of Ham (Gen. ix. 25):

“And he said, cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

Of course you “gentlemen of the cloth” know better than I do what authority Noah had over the children of Ham. Judging from his words, without reference to his authority, it looks very much like an intention to

enslave that unfortunate race; and, if the negroes belong to it, as some suppose, accounts for that perpetual bondage which has always been their lot. But, my clerical friends, what is your opinion of the passage?

"It means," answers some representative D.D., "the national subjection of Canaan's posterity to the descendants of his brethren: I have preached from the passage, and shown satisfactorily that this is the proper construction. Of course it is. Slavery being inconsistent with the law of God is certainly not referred to."

Excuse my interrupting you; but assuming slavery to be inconsistent with the laws of God, and proving the meaning of the passage from this assumption, logicians would call a *petitio principii*; it is logic we are not used to at the bar; in fact, my friend—with deference for your clerical habits—it is really not available out of the pulpit. Suppose we take a more scholar-like course. You have a Hebrew Bible lying on your table; if you will allow me to trespass on the manor lands of the Church so far as to dig after a Hebrew root, I will find the passage. The original reads, *ngabed ngabadim*; excuse my poor pronunciation, but I taught myself the Hebrew, in order to study more thoroughly the word of God, and I know nothing about the pronunciation of the schools. Now let me have your lexicon; I see you have a Boston edition of Gesenius, and little faith as I have in Yankee school books generally, I accept its authority. Let us read the definition: "*ngabed*, a servant who among the Hebrews was also a slave, whether born in the house or bought with money;" *Ngabadim*, being the plural of *ngabed*, the passage ought to be translated, according to the Boston lexicon, "a slave of slaves."

"No, sir, never!" exclaims my D.D. somewhat warmly; "the patriarch never meant slavery! never, sir! never! Such a construction is totally irreconcilable with the benevolence of God! Ha! I thought not!" Here my clerical friend brightens up. "Look further down the page; *ngabed* is also used in the complimentary address of subjects to their prince, such as, I am your majesty's humble servant."

Excuse me again, my friend, but we are back once more to our old assumption of premises. However, you are right in one respect; *ngabed* is sometimes used in a complimentary sense; but, deferentially of course, Noah's curse looks to me very little like paying compliments to the children of Ham. On the whole, our understanding of the passage is so very wide apart that there is one only point of harmony between us: it is not a condemnation of slavery.

So ends my colloquy with the representative D.D. In fact, he has been so long used to assumptions that he regards them as legitimate premises, and is unwilling or unable to argue on any other footing. Still it is sufficient for my present purpose, that in the earliest passage of the Bible,



where slavery is mentioned, it is not prohibited. I may add, however, to my criticism on the word *ngabed*, that it is translated in the Septuagint *oikeles*, a house slave, so that the proper rendering of the Greek version is, "a house slave of house slaves shall he be."

The next reference to the subject which we find is the enumeration of the property acquired by the patriarch Abraham in Egypt (Gen. xii. 16): "And he [Abraham] had sheep, and oxen and he-asses, and *men-servants* and *maid-servants*, and she-asses and camels."

Were the men-servants and maid-servants thus seceduled with the other property of the patriarch, bondmen? The word "had" of our English version implies possession. The original of "man-servants" is *ngabadin*, the plural of *ngabed*, which we have already defined; of maid-servants, the Hebrew is *sh'phakot*, translated in the Septuagint *παῖδες αἰ*, (*paidisai*,) and defined in the lexicons, female household slaves. No critic disputes the meaning of either word: a philanthropist possibly may; but with a philanthropist who is not a critic, there being no common ground on which we can meet, I can have no argument. One point, however, even philanthropy will concede: the passage certainly does not prohibit slavery; and this concession is all I ask at present.

Next in order is Genesis, xiv. 14, the rescue of Lot by his martial relative, the patriarch Abraham.

"And when Abraham heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan."

Who were these trained servants born in the patriarch's own house? Some philanthropists say subjects; others set them down as hired men. Common sense, from the reading of the passage, says they were certainly slaves, and philology and the lexicons agree with common sense. The original words for "servants born in his own house" are translated into one Greek word *οἰκογενεῖς* (houseborn,) by the Septuagint, and defined in the lexicons as *vernæ*, houseborn slaves. The meaning of the passage will not be disputed by any one acquainted with the words. But even the all-powerful assumption that so good a man as Abraham could not possibly have been a slaveholder, cannot construe this narrative into a prohibition of slavery.

My next reference is to Abraham's circumcision of his household—Genesis, xvii. 12.

"12. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger which is not of thy seed.

"13. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised.

"23. And Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money."

"All that were bought with his money" is certainly as significant of slavery as the Anglo-Saxon could make it, and the Anglo-Saxon is a faithful translation. How would you translate it, my clerical friend? or, if you are satisfied with the present version, how do you interpret it, so as to avoid the conclusion that the patriarch bought his fellow-man with his money?

The other passages of Genesis I shall refer to without comment, as they are merely cumulation of evidence on a point already more than sufficiently established.

"Now Sarai, Abraham's wife, bare him no children; and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar."—Genesis, xvi. 1.

Ch. xxi. "9. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

"10. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this *bondwoman* and her son: for the son of this *bondwoman* shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."—xxi. 10. The Apostle Paul also speaks of Hagar as a *bondwoman*.

"And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house that ruled over all that he had."—Gen. xxiv. 2.

After the days of Abraham, the next notice of slavery we find is in the history of Jacob; besides the mention of Zilpah and Bilhah as hand-maidens, (Gen. 30,) it appears from a schedule that his property, like his grandfather's, included *men-servants* and *maid-servants*.

"And the man (Jacob) increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants and men-servants, and camels and asses."—Genesis, xxx. 43.

The same enumeration is subsequently repeated, Gen. xxxii. 5. "And I have oxen and asses, and flocks, and men-servants and women-servants."

The last reference to slavery which I find in the book is the case of Joseph.

"Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt."—Genesis, xxxvii. 28.

Ch. xxxix. 1. "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, *bought him* of the hands of the Ishmaelites."

"5. And the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field."

So much for the Book of Genesis, the starting-point of our religion. There is not a word in condemnation of slavery, and there is much which may fairly be construed as a sanction.

## SECTION II.

### THE JEWISH COMMONWEALTH AS DECIDEDLY PRO-SLAVERY AS SOUTH CAROLINA.

After a thorough examination of the Book of Genesis, I proceed to the other books of Moses, and to the rest of the Old Testament. The passages which relate to slavery are principally, if not altogether connected with the constitution and laws of the commonwealth of Israel. Slavery was a "peculiar institution" of that commonwealth, just as unquestionably as it is of South Carolina or Virginia. This fact, of course well known to our clerical friends, completely nullifies the inferences against slavery which some of them are so fond of drawing from the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. My proof of the fact is the slave law itself. (Levit. xxv. 44.)

"44. Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen, which are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

"45. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

"46. And ye shall take them as an inheritance, for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever: but over your brethern, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule, one over another, with rigor."

I shall not ask you, my clerical friend, to preach from these verses, but I shall ask you to point me to any laws of our Southern States, which more unequivocally establish slavery.

In addition to the laws, which made strangers and heathen the "bondmen forever" of the Israelites, and the "inheritance" of their children, the legislation of Moses went a step further; a step further even than any of our slaveholding States. Under certain circumstances which are laid down, the Jews are allowed to hold as slaves their own brethren of the Israelitish race: a condition of servitude common enough in ancient times, and in Africa now, but unknown among us. This legislation we find in the Book of Exodus. (Ex. xxi.)

"2. If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

"3. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him.

"4. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons

or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.

"5. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free,

"6. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges: he shall also bring him to the door or unto the door post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever."

This passage, is, of course, familiar to my clerical friend; perhaps his ingenuity has before now interpreted it into a prohibition of slavery; but if he can point me to as harsh a phase of slavery in any regions of the South, I will surrender my case at discretion.

In the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, there are so many passages referring to slavery, and legislating for it as an established institution, that to quote them all would be idle cumulation. There are some, however, which my subject requires me to cite. Leviticus (xxv. 39-40) shows how well the distinction between bondmen and hired servants was understood in the Israelitish community:—

"39. And if thy brother, that dwelleth by thee, be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant,

"40. But as a *hired servant*, and as a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee."

In another verse of the same chapter, we find an additional recognition of the distinct condition of the hired servant:—

"53. And as a yearly *hired servant* shall he be with him, and the other shall not rule with rigor over him in thy sight."

This passage refers to the case of an impoverished Israelite selling himself to a rich "sojourner or stranger;" who could not hold the Israelite in perpetual servitude, but only as a hired servant until the year of jubilee.

In the Book of Exodus (chap. xxi. 20) we have legislation on the power of chastisement which the Jewish master might exercise over his heathen bondman; more conformable to the rigor of ancient servitude, and more extensive than any now allowed.

"20. And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished.

"21. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money."

None of the laws of our Southern States exempt a master from punishment under similar circumstances. The reason also which is given for the exemption will, I fear, shock not a little our Northern sensibilities; "for he is his money;" stronger certainly than calling a man a chattel; so strong, indeed, that I must remind our philanthropists that the expres-

sion is not mine, and ask them to visit Moses and not me with their "just indignation."

In the same chapter of Exodus (xxi. 16) we find the law against "stealing a man;" which shows how full the Jewish legislation on slavery was.

"16. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death."

The best illustration of the utter poverty of antislavery logic I can point to, is the curious fact that this passage is the main scriptural authority which is cited against slavery. So far from being against slavery, it shows clearly its legal existence in the Jewish community; for if property in slaves had not been recognized, the prohibiting the "stealing a man" would have been very useless legislation. You cannot steal a man, so that he be found in your hand in Pennsylvania; in a slave State you may. If, therefore, the other Jewish laws, which I have quoted, were swept away, this provision would be sufficient for my argument.

To complete my digest of the Mosaic legislation on slavery, I shall mention only the law prohibiting the rendition of bondmen who escape within the borders of Israel from the surrounding nations. (Deuteronomy, xxiii. 15.)

"15. Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant who is escaped from his master unto thee.

"16. He shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him."

This passage has been the text of thousands of sermons against the fugitive slave laws, and is probably the foundation of that erroneous Northern conscience which appeals to "the higher law" against the rendition clauses of the Constitution. If the higher law has no better foundation than this, it is certainly built on the sand, and some day, great will be its fall.

The passage refers to bondmen who escape from masters in surrounding nations; otherwise it is in conflict with those laws which I have cited, as well as with the settled historical facts of Jewish history. If it referred to Jewish masters—if a servant who escaped from his Jewish master became virtually free—bondmen would have been a very unprofitable "possession," and a very mean "inheritance;" and the Jews would not have remained, as they undeniably were, always slaveholders. No one can read the sixteenth verse carefully without acknowledging that the "thee, even among you," and the "one of thy gates, where it liketh him best," refer to the Jewish people and not to an individual. On the whole, if this is the text of the "higher law," our Northern conscience is a baseless fabric; as long as the Union continues, at all events, and we remain one nation.

I have but one point left in connection with the Jewish commonwealth, the Decalogue. That great code itself contains a recognition of property in slaves. (Exodus, xx.)

"10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy *man-servant*, nor thy *maid-servant*, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.

"17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his *man-servant*, nor his *maid-servant*, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

You have read these commandments a thousand times, I presume; but has it ever struck you, my clerical friend, that thy neighbor's man-servant and maid-servant are enumerated as his property? If not, the veil has been on your heart, while you were reading the very moral code which it is your business to teach. You will take, perhaps, the old ground, that the maid-servant and man-servant mean hired servants. The original Hebrew is the same word *ngabed* which we have already examined; you know better than I do—at least it is your business to know better than I, a mere lawyer—that there is another Hebrew word for hired servant.

The recognition which the Decalogue makes of property in slaves, I am using now merely as cumulative evidence to show the pro-slavery character of the Jewish commonwealth. This is all the present stage of my argument requires. Hereafter perhaps, if I judge it necessary, I shall refer to these commandments as the moral code of all generations of men, as binding on us now as on the people of Israel—a position my clerical friend will not dispute—and their sanction of slavery as a just foundation for modern conscience, and a just rule of modern morality.

There is nothing in the Old Testament contradictory of what I have cited, and additional references would overload, without strengthening my argument. No evidence would establish more conclusively than I have already done, that there is no prohibition of slavery. Next, it is equally clear, that the man who stands in high moral relief among the men of those early generations—the "father of the faithful," in whose seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed—was a slaveholder; and that the institutions of God's chosen people were pro-slavery. To the extent of the ground which the Old Testament covers, I have now a right to say, that my proposition is sustained, and that the Bible sanctions slavery. This is all I claim at present. I do not claim the defective institutions of the Jews—to whom so much was conceded on account of the "hardness of their hearts"—as modern standards. But whenever in the slavery controversy any reference to the Old Testament is made, I have a right to the vantage ground of having shown it to be unequivocally pro-slavery.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT.

#### SECTION I.

##### NO EXPRESS PROHIBITION OF SLAVERY.

UP to the point we have now reached, there has been properly nothing to discuss. It has been a trial by the record; and the record which I have produced shows conclusively that the law of God, as far as the Old Testament legislation goes, does not prohibit slavery. There is no getting over the clear language of Moses, unless we are in the condition of those spoken of by the Apostle, (2 Cor. iii. 15,) "Even unto this day when Moses is read the vail is on their heart;" or unless, like the infidel sophists, who are the only consistent antislavery logicians, we repudiate his authority altogether.

But now we are on debatable ground. The position of slavery under the Gospel dispensation is not so clear that much cannot be said on both sides. There is room for difference of opinion, which cannot be said in reference to the Old Testament, but at the same time the weight of the argument seems to me vastly in favor of my proposition.

As a first point, I take the position that the moral code of the New Testament contains no express prohibition of slaveholding. I do not think this position will be disputed. If there is any such law, I cannot find it; and if you, my clerical friend, will find it for me, I will haul down my flag and turn abolitionist. I have before me now a resolution of some ecclesiastical body—General Assembly, or Presbytery—which embodies so fully the aspect of the question, as I find it among antislavery Christians, that I extract it as evidence that no such positive law is claimed to exist.

"We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourself, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ, which enjoins, that all things that ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them."

In this exposition of antislavery Christianity, the law of God, which

slaveholding is said to be inconsistent with, is the precept "to love our neighbor as ourself." The founding an inferential condemnation on this general precept, is a concession that no specific law against slavery exists. Such is certainly the case. The opponents of slavery are obliged to depend exclusively on what the above resolution calls "the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ." How utterly fallacious that dependence is—how perfectly inapplicable those general precepts are—I shall show hereafter. At present I ask attention to the important fact, that slavery is not expressly prohibited by the legislation of Christ.

My clerical friends know better than I—is it not their proper business?—that the moral laws of the New Testament are full and definite. Murder, and theft, and perjury, and fornication, and hypocrisy, and countless other moral offenses, down to grades as light as "evil speaking one of another," are expressly prohibited by the lips of the Divine Lawgiver, or the pens of his inspired representatives. None of those offenses are left to the vague jurisdiction of "the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ." To place slaveholding on that footing is totally irreconcilable with the whole character of the Gospel code; especially if it be regarded, in the lurid light of abolitionism, as a combination of murder and many other heinous offenses. For my part, if I thought as badly of slaveholding as some of my clerical friends do, and could find no express prohibition of it in the Bible, I would renounce the moral code of the book and go over straight into the infidel camp. But, my learned friends, with all deference to your biblical studies, I must tell you frankly, you have mistaken the character of scriptural legislation.

When we consider, that slavery was an institution of the Jewish nation, established by Moses, recognized in the Decalogue, handed down through all the changeful fortunes of their national history, in full vigor at the coming of our Saviour, it is impossible to believe that he would not have prohibited it expressly, if he had regarded it as you do. However, these considerations belong properly to a future stage of my argument. All I wish at present to lay down is, that there is nowhere in the New Testament an express prohibition of slavery.

## SECTION II.

### "THE SPIRIT AND PRINCIPLE OF THE GOSPEL."

It being settled—conceded, I may say—that there is no express prohibition of slavery in the New Testament, and that the prohibition, if any, is by "the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ," our next step is to define that "spirit and principle." Terms so general and indefinite can not profitably be used in any discussion which has certainty and truth for its object.



In my clerical antislavery resolution I find a description which I am willing to accept as a definition: "The spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ, which enjoin 'that all things which ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them,' if extended to include the other precepts of the Sermon on the Mount—and of course my clerical friends do not object—it will place the legislation which is called "the Spirit of the Gospel" on definite ground.

Those exalted precepts of Him "who spake as never man spake" may be called the laws of the kingdom of Christ; which he says is "not of this world," and which necessarily implies legislation not for the things of this world. Moses, Lyeurgus, and Justinian legislate for the outward actions of men; Christ for the feelings and impulses, and for "the thought of the heart." He does not repeal their laws—those against theft, murder, and other ordinary crimes—for he did not come "to destroy but to fulfill," and he fulfills by rendering unnecessary—unnecessary because his sublime legislation, literally carried out by all men, would render all other laws superfluous. If every man loved his neighbor as himself, and did to other men what he would have them do to him, all the ends of human laws and human government would be answered without legislatures, courts, or magistrates. Truly the sublime legislation of Christ does not destroy, but fulfills the law and the prophets.

The laws of the kingdom of Christ are not among "the things which are Cæsar's." Those laws cannot be administered by human hands; and the attempt, whether by Spanish inquisitor or New England clergyman, while it usurps Christ's prerogatives, violates man's "most sacred and inalienable rights." The only earthly jurisdiction is the individual's own conscience. In fact, even if the right existed, those laws could be administered practically in no other forum. For illustration, consider the law: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." No one but the individual himself can apply it to the practical duties of life, because no one else can know what he would that others should do to him. We, who are outside of his feelings and thoughts, may imagine and conjecture what he would have others do, but it would, after all, be only our vague conjecture. So of the other great law: "Love your neighbor as yourself," we may infer what love for one's self would lead another than ourselves to do, but we can have no certainty: for instance, we might infer that it would prevent a man from taking another's life, and yet in the case of a man bent on suicide, the inference would lead astray. However, I do not think this point will be disputed at the present day; at least until we are prepared for the inquisition and other means of sustaining the kingdom of Christ by external coercion.

My next point is that these elevated precepts or laws stand on peculiar ground. They were primarily enacted for the moral government of those persons who are called from darkness unto light, who are born again from above, ("ye must be born from above,") who have new hearts given them, ("a new heart will I give you,") and who are the proper citizens of the kingdom of Christ. But they seem too elevated even for them: one might almost say they were enacted for man in a more advanced state; either the millennium on earth or that hereafter, which is the inheritance of the "blessed made perfect." Certain it is, at present, even those that profess to love Christ do not live up to these his peculiar laws. This is my next point.

It is an unfortunate truth, my clerical friend, that none of us, not even yourself, I am afraid, live up to these laws, which form "the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ." For myself, I make the confession sorrowfully but in sober truth: I confess I do not love my neighbor as myself; if I did, I would follow the construction put on this law in the days of the Apostles: "For as many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." I confess I do not obey that other great law: "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." My conscience allows me to defend myself against evil men, to the extent even of the death of an assailant, or of half a dozen assailants—their blood be on their own heads. There are so many of these laws, however, which I do not live up to, that I omit the recapitulation. So much for my confession. Now for yours, my clerical friend. Read over the Sermon on the Mount, and answer faithfully, how many of those sublime precepts you fairly keep: one-half? one-fourth? If one-fourth, I shall stand rebuked before you and humbly own that your "manner of living is more reconcilable than mine, with the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ." May God in his grace enable us to keep all these his commandments; but our chance of heaven will be poor indeed if it depend on our present obedience. "Oh wretched man that I am," says St. Paul, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

If these principles are sound, they reverse our clerical condemnation of slavery. It is not for New England clergyman or infidel sophist to decide that any man's act—slaveholding even—admittedly not condemned by any express law of Scripture, is "totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ:" that decision is for his own conscience: "who art thou who judgest another man's servant?" To apply the law of God, "Love your neighbor as yourselves," to any-

body's case but one's own, is a "gross violation of the most sacred and precious rights of human nature"—the rights of conscience. It is the same principle exactly which influenced the inquisition; and which, beginning on the hope to save men's souls, ended with the burning of their bodies at the stake. In like manner the effort to coerce slaveholders to love their neighbors as themselves, may end in bringing the horrors of St. Domingo on Virginia and Carolina.

Again, the "spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ," is not lived up to generally; not even, I venture to say, by the gentleman who wrote the very resolution I have quoted; certainly was not by St. Paul—I have his own authority for saying so. If not generally lived up to, if all of us fall short in so many particulars, if none of us—not even our clerical friends—love our neighbors as ourselves, why do we make slaveholding an exception? Why do we require of slaveholders a stricter obedience than we ourselves yield? On our Saviour's rule—let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone—if slaveholders are to wait until some one who loves his neighbor as himself can be found to begin, their condemnation will be sufficiently long postponed.

### SECTION III.

ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO UNTO YOU DO YE EVEN SO UNTO THEM.

The considerations I have already presented are sufficient for my argument; yet a special examination of this memorable precept will cover the ground more completely. In fact, the precept involves the very substance of the supposed prohibition of slavery by "the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ." If we would not wish to be bondmen of others, we ought not hold other men in bondage.

By this broad construction, the precept certainly decides the slavery question—and much more. It decides that no citizen can enforce a private right, nor public officer execute an official duty, by compulsory means. A judge is estopped in a case before him by the consideration that changing places with the losing party he would not like a decision against himself; the sheriff is in a similar predicament when he undertakes to arrest a criminal; and so every other public functionary. In fact, this broad construction supersedes legislatures, courts, and magistrates, and inaugurates the millennium; millennium rules for good men, while the bad still live under the code of Pandemonium. We are not yet quite prepared for the "good time coming," when "the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and a child shall lead them;" when war and despotism, and slaveholding even shall cease; when men will need no government but the rule of

their own conscience. The absurdities to which the antislavery construction of this precept necessarily leads, confirm—prove *a posteriori* I may say—the soundness of the views I presented in my last section. But enough has been said; a construction which abolishes slavery, by abolishing all law and all government, confutes itself.

The fact is—I am sorry to be obliged to say it, and I say it with great deference—the views of our clerical friends on “the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ” are exceedingly crude. Unless we confine those spiritual laws to spiritual matters, and allow the administration exclusively to the individual conscience, we place them in antagonism with human government and make them inconsistent with rights under human laws. For illustration: “Love your neighbor as yourself,” when not left to a man’s own conscience, is in collision with his right of property; though on this point the practice of “the cloth” is better than the theories; few, if any being especially willing to divide surplus good things among poorer neighbors. However, I recommend—if a layman’s recommendation counts anything in such matters—as a part of the regular theological course, a more thorough study of the whole subject from the Saviour’s command, “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s;” to St. Paul’s dictum, “The powers that be are ordained of God.” Meanwhile—that is, until our clerical friends become better acquainted with the question than they are now—I lay down a proposition to guide them clear of absurdities; the duties enjoined by “the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ” are not inconsistent with rights vested under human laws, nor with the duties imposed by human government, unless in extreme cases, where human laws are violations of the clear, that is, the express laws of God. The application of this principle to slaveholding carries us back to our first question, whether or not it is expressly prohibited.

#### SECTION IV.

##### THE NEW TESTAMENT SANCTIONS SLAVERY.

I have but one link more in the argument on my first proposition. I have shown, incontrovertibly, that slavery was an institution of the commonwealth of Israel; I have also shown, virtually by antislavery concession, that there is no express prohibition in the New Testament. In reference to the supposed condemnation of slavery by “the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ,” I have shown that the principle invoked is theoretically inapplicable to the question; is practically not the standard of our ordinary morality; and if applied by any other authority than a man’s own conscience, begins with absurdity and ends with sub-

version of law and government. This last position will be strengthened by my argument on the next point; for whatever shows that slavery is sanctioned by the New Testament, also shows that it is not irreconcilable with "the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ."

In welding my last link, the first stroke—not a heavy one, I frankly admit—is the reticence of the Saviour himself.

In his day slavery prevailed so universally that, as far as we know from history, there was not a single nation of the earth which did not hold slaves. The Jews, his countrymen after the flesh, availing themselves fully of their legal privileges, held numerous bondmen. The Romans, the sovereigns of Judea and of the civilized world, were slaveholders on a scale which has never been rivaled. Slavery at that period was much more barbarous than now. The Jewish master possessed almost the powers of life and death. The Roman possessed them fully in the days of the republic, and even under the more rigid government of the empire was seldom limited except in such terrible cases as that of the epicure who was punished for feeding his carp with the bodies of his slaves.

If slavery, at the present day, is "a gross violation of the most sacred and precious rights of human nature, utterly inconsistent with the law of God, totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principle of the Gospel," much more was it all this in the days of the Divine Lawgiver himself; if denunciation of slaveholding is a moral duty now, much more was it then. But the Saviour does not denounce it. If a single word of the simplest condemnation, much less denunciation, can be found in the four gospels, I will join the crusade against slavery. That is a fair offer, certainly. Will you, my clerical friend, take issue with me, and if you cannot find any denunciation, let slavery alone? If this fair settlement of the question involves the mortification of owning yourself to have been in the wrong, and is more than I have a right to ask even from a minister of the Gospel of peace, I may certainly ask some explanation of the reticence itself. Why did not the Saviour condemn slavery? Answer satisfactorily, or I may certainly ask you, in the present disastrous times, when agitation of the subject is plunging our country into civil war, not to make a point of conscience of not following his example. Meanwhile I hold up his reticence as an inferential sanction.

This sanction of slavery, inferable from the silent consent of the Divine Lawgiver, I do not press as far as I am entitled to, because there is no necessity. The positive sanction is too clear. If the Apostle Paul knew "the mind and will of Christ," there can be no doubt. His exposition of "the spirit and principle of the Gospel" is so decided as to leave my clerical friends no resource but to class him, along with myself, as a "Northern dough-face."

As a starting-point, I cite the Apostle's code of reciprocal duties for masters and slaves, as we may fairly call it, which is found in chapter sixth of Ephesians.

"5. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in singleness of your heart as unto Christ.

"6. Not with eye service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart.

"7. With good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men.

"8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

"9. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your master also is in heaven, neither is there any respect of person with him."

In the Epistle to Titus, (ii. 9,) we find some additional laws:

"9. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

"10. Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

If this short but complete code of the reciprocal duties of masters and servants is not a sanction of slavery, I know not what can be called so. The only door of escape is the assumption—a most unwarrantable one, without any philological basis whatever—that the "servants" (*oi douloi*) are hired persons, and not bondmen. The resorting to such an argument only shows the barrenness of the antislavery field. The mere reading of the passage, especially the apposition of "bond" to "free," in the ninth verse, negatives the supposition. But the meaning of the word *δουλος* is not doubtful. It always means slave, or bondman, or something which implies a servile condition. The Helots were the *douloi* of the Spartans, and there is the same reason for applying the term "hired persons" to them as to the servants addressed by the Apostle. The word for hired person is *misthotes* (*μισθωτης*), as we find in the parable of the prodigal son—"Make me as a *hired* servant."

In 1 Corinthians we have another exposition of the moral duties of bondmen. (Chap. vii. 21, etc.)

"21. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

"22. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

"23. Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men."

"If thou mayest be made free, use it," says the Apostle. Our clerical friends would announce, in the words of their resolution, thy master's claim

is "a gross violation of the most sacred and precious rights of human nature, and inconsistent with the law of God;" thou art free of course.

In the First Epistle to Timothy we have another expression of the Apostle's views. (1 Tim. vi. 1.)

"1. Let as many servants (*douloi*) as are under the yoke count their own masters as worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

"2. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

"3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

"4. He is proud, knowing nothing." \* \* \*

I do hope, my clerical friend, this passage is not in your copy of the Testament. If it is, you do not consult the book as much as you ought, or you would have seen it; and certainly would have ended all fellowship with the Apostle of the Gentiles. Not only does he recommend "servants under the yoke" "to honor their masters," but he says that those "who teach otherwise"—meaning you, my friend—"do not consent to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," and "are proud, knowing nothing." After this you certainly would not admit the "dough-face" Apostle into your pulpit.

With these passages of the Scripture—and others which might be cited—all so clear and conclusive, staring them full in the face, it is one of the curiosities of ecclesiastical literature that our clerical friends could pronounce slavery "utterly irreconcilable with the spirit and principle of the Gospel of Christ." The only plausible supposition is, that by some confusion of identity they have mistaken themselves for the other division of the antislavery army, that which marches under the infidel flag.

With an apology to one portion of my readers for overloading my evidence, and a disclaimer of any wish to satisfy that other portion, who, like the brethren of Dives, would not be convinced "though one should rise from the dead," I shall end my references with the Epistle to Philemon. I mean the whole Epistle, which I recommend you to read carefully; that is, unless you "search the Scriptures" only to confirm yourself in your antislavery prejudices; in which case, do not read it at all.

If it is possible to express facts clearly in words, it is clear: first, that Onesimus was a slave, (*doulos*;) second, that he had fled from his master, Philemon, but his views of duty being changed by his conversion, that he was now willing to return; third, that the Apostle, instead of

considering the relation of master and slave as void, and aiding or even advising the slave to escape, actually sent him back to his owner. With such a case as this against you, my clerical friend, I will not press the argument; I even offer you my condolence. Consider me as condoling with you on your having to admit that the antislavery Christianity, which you have been teaching for years, is "not according to godliness."

And now I close the argument on my first proposition. What say you, gentlemen of the New England pulpit, is my proposition sustained? If you decide against me, I must appeal to the common sense of the lay community. But let me tell you, gentlemen, you are damaging the authority of the word of God itself when you interpret it, not on its obvious meaning, but according to your assumptions of its supposed spirit and principle. If you can construe the Bible into condemnation of slavery, you can construe it to condemn any institution and any principles, and into any meaning. But you are treading on dangerous ground. You are destroying all certainty in the interpretation of Scripture. You are giving up to the infidel sophists, your natural enemies, though at present your temporary allies, the very key of your position, which hereafter they will use against you and all Christian believers.



## CHAPTER IV.

### SLAVERY, A PHASE OF GOVERNMENT.

BEFORE I leave the religious part of my subject I must answer the question, why our Divine Lawgiver did not legislate on slavery. He answers it himself when he says, "My kingdom is not of this world." His legislation is moral and spiritual. His laws regulate our moral relations with one another and our spiritual relations with himself. He came on earth to deliver us from the bondage of sin; to purify the impulses and thoughts of the heart; to elevate us, and render us fit to associate hereafter with the "just made perfect."

Forms of government—rights of person and property—regulation of the legal rights and duties of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant—fell not within the scope, and are not the objects, of his legislation. He has prescribed no form of government, and he has proscribed none. In his day, through the unjust laws of conquest, the Jews were the subjects of the grand old Roman Empire, and the empire itself was ruled unrighteously by imperial tyrants; yet there is not a word of objection to that twofold despotism; and the memorable "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" even recognizes its sovereignty.

The absence of laws on these points in the New Testament legislation is an illustration, if not an evidence, of its divine origin. The Mosaic laws, enacted for a single race, under peculiar circumstances, regulate the political and social relations of men. The laws of Christ, designed for all the races of men, under every variety of circumstance and every condition of civilization, leave it to men themselves to adopt such institutions as their various circumstances demand. With one race, utterly incapable of self-government, despotism may be a necessity; another may be capable of semi-self-government, and resort to constitutional monarchy; another may be civilized enough, or adventurous enough, for a republic.

Nor does the omission of political objects render the legislation of Christ in any respect defective. While he prescribes no forms of government, his precepts prescribe moral duties on those who administer every form; while he organizes no domestic institutions, "the spirit and principle of the gospel of Christ" extend to all, and regulate the duties of all. Slavery stands on the same moral ground as the rest; not prohibited,

not established, but regulated. The development of this idea completes what I have to say on the scriptural aspects of my question.

Analysis of slavery shows, that it is a phase of government; a phase of government adapted to the special case of different races intermingled together; one capable of self-government, the other not. Such is the position of our Southern States. The African race—if there is any faith in the historical experience that a constitutional monarchy, much more a republic, has always been above its civilization—is utterly incapable of self-government. Whether they are the children of Ham or not, the curse of Noah has always been on them, and “servants of servants” always have they literally been. Judging from fact and history, and not from theoretic assumptions of what is supposed to be the benevolence of God—but which is really the vain imagination of man—despotism and slavery seem the normal condition of the negro race. At all events, their present habits certainly do not practically fit them for self-government. Such a race, in a country of their own, left to themselves, are necessarily not freemen, and in our Anglo-Saxon community, allowing them political privileges, at the best impairs, and when they are superior in numbers, inevitably subverts, republican institutions. The great law of necessity—which justifies despotic powers of government in preference to anarchy—justifies the domestic institutions of the South, and places them, philosophically, on the same moral platform with kings and parliaments, and constitutional sovereigns generally.

The fact is to be remembered, however, though we men of the North often lose sight of it, that we ourselves have settled the main points of the slavery question on Southern principles. The *political* servitude of the negro race is as complete in Pennsylvania, where the constitution acknowledges none but free *white* citizens, as it is in Virginia. If the negro's right of making the laws which govern him, is one of those “most precious and sacred rights of human nature,” which slavery grossly violates, our own constitution is as inconsistent with the law of God as those of the Southern States. In addition to our legislation, the South only denies certain industrial and social rights, important undoubtedly, but as mere rights entirely subordinate and secondary.

If it is conceded, or proved, that men have a moral right to adopt such forms of government and such subordinate domestic institutions as their necessities require, my moral question is settled. Slaveholding is a modification of that patriarchal government which was the earliest form, and probably universal until the days of Nimrod, that hunter of men; that form which the Roman commonwealth recognized in the power of life and death it allowed the *paterfamilias*; which still survives in the limited household powers of fathers over children, and in this form underlies all the law and order of modern society. There is the same moral warrant

for the power of the master as there is for that of the father over his grown-up sons, whose actions and industrial rights he controls: both are given by laws founded on the same necessity. There is the same moral warrant for slaveholding as there is for the non-representative powers of czar, king, or peer. When necessity inaugurates those powers, to treat them as a violation of the laws of God, is to canonize anarchy and barbarism. Slavery itself, so far from being what the vain sophists of New England call it, a barbarous institution, is the best means of bringing barbarians under the blessed influences of civilization.

The true moral responsibility is in the exercise of those powers. King, peer, or slaveholder, the man must some day give an account of the deeds done in the body. It is a fearful responsibility to possess those high powers of royalty or slaveholding, which charge one's conscience not only with the temporal well-being of our fellow-men, but in a measure with their moral interests. It is a moral responsibility which no thoughtful man should take on himself lightly, but which, when imposed by the exigencies of his situation, he should look fully in the face; with fear and trembling, as the Apostle says, in singleness of heart as to Christ, knowing that there is a Master in heaven with whom there is no respect of person, and before whose judgment-seat bond and free shall alike stand. The slaveholder who meets his moral responsibilities conscientiously "fights the good fight of faith" against many temptations, above those which beset us Northern Christians, and shall receive the more abundant reward.

The moral duties of slavemasters are laid down clearly in the Apostle Paul's code, and by that "spirit and principle of the gospel of Christ" which those "who are proud and know nothing" have erroneously invoked against slavery itself. The specific application of those moral laws is the affair of Southern conscience not of mine. There are one or two points, however, which I shall allow myself to refer to. It is the moral duty, I think, of Southern legislation, to provide against the separation of slave families, and for the more formal recognition of the marriage relation. It is also a moral duty, if my principles of the moral basis of slavery are sound, to establish some system by which the negro who is fit for self-government should be allowed to purchase his own freedom—with a provision of deportation, however; the intermingling of negro freemen without the right of suffrage standing theoretically on the same ground as slavery itself, and only justifiable from the same principle of necessity. These suggestions are founded on principles and usages which already exist practically in many parts of the South. If they were legalized everywhere, the moral duties of slaveholders would, in my opinion, stand on a platform which ought to satisfy the tenderest conscience of Northern Christians.

## APPENDIX.

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THE first part of my treatise has led me away from my ordinary pursuits and studies. In fact, my acquaintance with the Scriptures being such only as every educated layman ought to have, I would not venture to discuss a doubtful point with those who make the word of God their specialty. But my point is not doubtful. The anti-slavery construction is like the old anti-Copernican clerical astronomy: once universally orthodox, now looked back to only as an illustration of human fallibility.

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My other propositions place me on more familiar ground. In demonstrating, as I think I can, that slavery is not a "violation of the most sacred and inalienable rights of man," I shall be among principles which are, or ought to be, the study of every lawyer. Perhaps, however, I shall go more deeply than my case absolutely requires, into the consideration of political and industrial rights. Independently of the present question, some discussion of rights is greatly needed. We have *Fourth-of-Julied* liberty to death; though from ignorance that the vital spark has left her, we have not yet laid her in the grave.

In the North we have talked sentimentally over the rights of man, until we have forgotten that he has duties also, and until we have lost sight of his interests. In the South, pæans have been sung to State rights and independent sovereignties and confederacy of republics—all very well when subordinate to constitutional nationality—until public opinion is prepared for secession: that rope of sand to anchor the ship of State with.

The evil is deep seated. Public opinion of both sections has gone radically astray. Liberty does not mean license, but restraint; the restraint of the laws of man's nature, and of those subordinate laws which the knowledge of his own nature leads him to impose on himself. Without such restraint there is no security for life, person, and property; men take their own protection into their own hands; anarchy follows; and finally some strong hand reduces the chaos to order: "order reigns in Warsaw." Abolitionism, whether of the lawless mob, rescuing fugitive

slaves from Federal officers, or in the more specious form of personal liberty bills, is a step toward anarchy; secession is a short cut to the same fatal bourne; both are derived from the same source—ignorance of the true nature of liberty.

## SECESSION.

SINCE my tract was written, the progress of secession imposes the most pressing and solemn duties on every citizen. For one—one Christian citizen—I can answer. I do not doubt of my duties; I do not flinch from my responsibilities. Those duties and responsibilities are, in my view, broader than the slavery question; broader than party affinities and politics. The question is not now which party shall govern the country, but whether we shall have hereafter any country at all.

By the letter of the law, secession is treason; but it is treason with “a color of right:” that revolutionary right which underlies all laws and all government. The people of the slaveholding States allege that their rights have been violated; that the National Government has been unable or unwilling to vindicate those rights, and thus has failed in the objects for which its high powers were intrusted.

Secession—the taking of the vindication into their own hands—is clearly not founded on the Constitution; is clearly not a political, much less a legal right. It is an appeal from all ordinary magistracies and jurisdictions to the people themselves in their ultimate sovereignty. To make such an appeal is a moral right, but it involves the most solemn moral responsibility before God and man which a human being can take. If the causes are insufficient, the citizen who appeals to revolution has on his soul the guilt of perjury, in disregarding his oath of allegiance, and the guilt of the blood which may be shed in unrighteous civil war. Even on sufficient cause, no thoughtful man will lightly make so terrible an appeal.

For the opponents of secession, whether in the North or the South, there are responsibilities almost equally grave. We have to decide how far it is our conscientious duty to sustain the National Government against those whom the law regards as guilty of treason and rebellion.

The decision depends on the facts which are the ground of their appeal. If their rights have really been infringed, we have no more moral right to coerce them into obedience than George III. had to coerce his rebellious colonies.

For myself—answering for my own belief and my own conscience solely—I believe that their rights have been infringed. Whenever those

rights shall be fully assured—but not before—I am willing to take on my conscience all the responsibilities of co-operating to sustain the National Government, and ready to answer to God at the great day for all the consequences. This is my conviction of duty; and my opinion of the duty of all other citizens, North or South. On this platform, but on no other, the Republic can be saved. Until these rights be assured, the North, so far from being unanimous, will receive no hearty support from the men of that great party which is beaten but still powerful, and still resolute in the cause of justice and right. But even if unanimous, numbers and resources can no more subdue the South contending for just rights, than the overwhelming power of the British crown could subdue the infant colonies. If political leaders make the attempt before every just right be assured, they will sow the wind to reap the whirlwind. As soon as rights shall be assured, secession will fall to the ground of itself—as the Blue-light Massachusetts secession did at the peace of Ghent; or sink under the weight of public opinion; or be crushed easily by the armed hands of the American people—as our Pennsylvania insurrection was by the armies of Washington.

Rights being first assured and justice fully done, I believe in the moral duty of protecting the social organization, national and local, against the bad passions of human nature and the treasonable measures of factious men. As a corollary, I believe that “we, the people of the United States of America,” have no moral right to dissolve our Union, but are morally bound—as our fathers were for their Declaration of Independence, on which the Union is founded—to pledge for it “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor:” and I believe it better for true liberty, progressive civilization, and genuine humanity, to save the Union at any present cost of life, than to choose for ourselves, and as the inheritance of our children, the vastly greater evils of secession, disintegration, and anarchy: and I also believe—despite of puling sentimentality, which, by shrinking from drops of blood in the present support of the laws, will open hereafter the very arteries of the community—that there is manly patriotism enough left, to bear the stars and stripes unflinchingly against all enemies, foreign or domestic. If you, my brother citizen, believe as I do, we are on one platform now, whatever our past politics may have been, and we will exchange that cheering watchword, which rang in the Senate house of Rome, and saved her, when Hannibal thundered at her gates—

*“Never despair of the Republic!”*









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